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LIBYA

**STATEMENT BY THE LIBYAN DELEGATION
AT THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellency, the Director-General of the Organisation,
Excellencies, members of the Council,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, the Libyan delegation wishes to extend its greetings to you, as you chair the Sixty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and to welcome the Director-General of the Organisation, the Deputy Director-General, the Vice-Chairpersons, the members of the Technical Secretariat and all honourable members of delegations.

This session of the Council is of particular importance for the Libyan delegation, as it is the first one in which it represents the Libya of the new era which came about as a crowning of a massive popular revolution fought by Libyans, during which they made enormous sacrifices that led to the overthrowing of a tyrannical, repressive regime which inflicted untold misery on the Libyan people over more than four decades. The support of the international coalition, pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1973, together with the role played by the States which stood by the revolution, has effectively contributed to what Libyans have achieved on the ground.

You are all no doubt aware that events in Libya over the last few months have cast their shadows on all aspects of life in the country, and on the functioning of the various structures of the crumbling State. One such consequence of this crisis is the current situation with regard to the Libyan programme for the destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile, as it became impossible to continue destruction activities in Ruwagha site.

Under such a course of events and in spite of its critical working conditions, the Permanent Representation of Libya to the OPCW, through contacts with sources inside the country, has continued to gather information and follow issues related to Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile, and has continued to inform the Technical Secretariat and the Executive Council of the situation in this regard, with a view to alleviating the concerns of States Parties regarding the physical safety and security of the said stockpile.

In addition, committed to upholding the integrity of the Convention and to complying with destruction-programme timelines, the Libyan Representation has attached particular importance to the issue of the deadline for the completion by Libya of the destruction of its remaining declared chemical weapons stockpile. We have cooperated with the Technical



Secretariat and the Executive Council to address this issue, which led to the adoption by the Council of a recommendation to the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session to grant Libya an extension, to 29 April 2012, of the deadline for the destruction of all its Category 1 chemical weapon stockpiles, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention (EC-M-30/DEC.1, dated 30 May 2011).

At the time when operations aimed at freeing Libyan cities were being conducted, the situation raised security concerns about the chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya. Thus, on 25 August 2011, our Representation called upon the Executive Council to provide advice and adequate support to respond to any emergency in this regard. Accordingly, on 1 September 2011, the Executive Council convened an informal meeting to discuss the situation in Libya. Following that meeting, the Office of the Director-General took the necessary action to coordinate the delivery of assistance, for which we are thankful. While those fears have now subsided with the notable and daily improvement of the situation, there are areas that continue to pose threats to public safety, due to consequences that could originate from toxic chemicals, hence the need to be prepared for any emergency. We welcome any kind of support in this regard, and we shall not fail to extend our deep thanks and gratitude to States Parties that have responded positively and expressed their readiness to provide support for the aforesaid purpose.

The Libyan delegation wishes to inform the Executive Council that the chemical weapons storage sites in Ruwagha are now secure and under the total control of, and strict protection by, Libyan National Transitional Council forces. On 3 October 2011, the Director-General of the Organisation received from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the National Transitional Council an urgent note confirming that and reiterating the call for the Technical Secretariat to send inspectors to Libya for inventory and verification of chemicals and to confirm their safety, thus paving the way for the resumption of destruction operations at the appropriate time.

Libya has started its journey towards building a State of law and institutions that would enable it to play a positive role within the international community. As officials in the Libyan National Transitional Council have stated on several occasions, Libya remains committed to all international conventions and treaties it has signed, including the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this context, my country will apply and enforce national measures aimed at ensuring the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention, based on transparency and clarity, and will accord the highest priority to the destruction and verification of chemical weapons.

We look forward, under the fledgling Libyan State, to expanding new horizons for a fruitful cooperation with the OPCW and its different structures with a view to making an effective contribution to achieving the objectives of the Convention, abiding by its principles and complying with all its provisions. Thus, in the near future, a new approach will be followed to establish serious contacts with the OPCW for closer, concrete and effective cooperation in the various legislation and implementation areas. We also look forward to promoting bilateral cooperation with States Parties to uphold the principles of international cooperation in activities related to developing skills of national personnel, transfer of expertise and exchange of technical and scientific information, chemicals and equipment.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, I wish you success in the deliberations of this session.

I thank you, and thank all present, for your attention, and would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session.